



ALL-STAR SQUADRON

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CODE



AUTHORITY



ROY THOMAS,
DON HECK, &
TONY D'ZUNIGA



AN UNTOLD TALE OF THE

**STAR
SQUADRON**

THE ORIGIN OF Johnny Quick

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LETTERER
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COLORIST

BASED ON THE STORY
BY MORT WEISINGER
& CHAD GROTHKOPF



3X2(9YZ)4A!

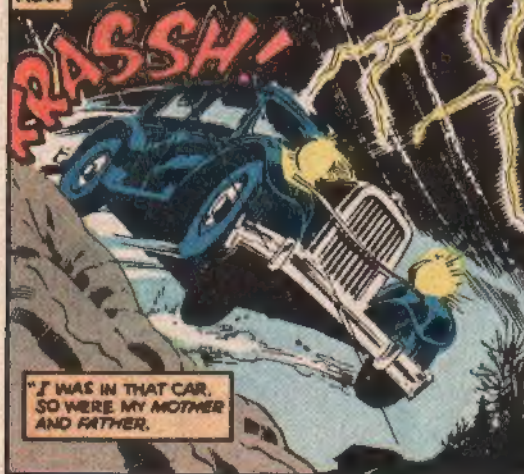
YEAH, TARANTULA...
LIBBY SAID YOU'D
BE AROUND TO
ASK ME ABOUT HOW
JOHNNY CHAMBERS
GOT INTO THE
HERO GAME.

NOPE, I DON'T MIND
GIVING YOU THE LOWDOWN--
LONG AS I KNOW IT WON'T BE
PUBLISHED OR ANYTHING,
UNTIL AND UNLESS I GIVE
THE WORD.

NO PROBLEM WHERE
TO BEGIN, EITHER. I'M A
SPEED FREAK, RIGHT?--
FASTER THAN ANYBODY
AROUND EXCEPT MAYBE
THE FLASH HIMSELF--SO
IT REALLY SHOULDN'T BE
TOO MUCH OF A SHOCK
TO ANYBODY--

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"-- THAT MY STORY STARTS WITH A SPEEDING CAR GOING OVER A STEEP EMBANKMENT, ONE NIGHT ABOUT A DECADE AGO.



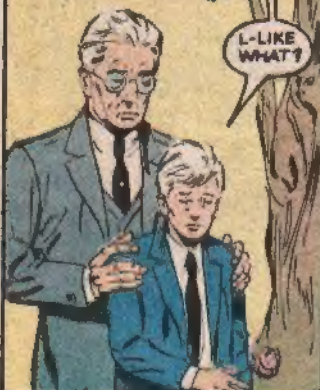
"BUT ONLY ONE OF US WALKED AWAY FROM IT.



HOW COME I LIVED THROUGH THE CRASH--AND THEY DIDN'T? IT JUST ISN'T FAIR...

MAYBE--MAYBE THE FATES HAVE SOMETHING ELSE IN MIND FOR YOU.

L-LIKE WHAT?

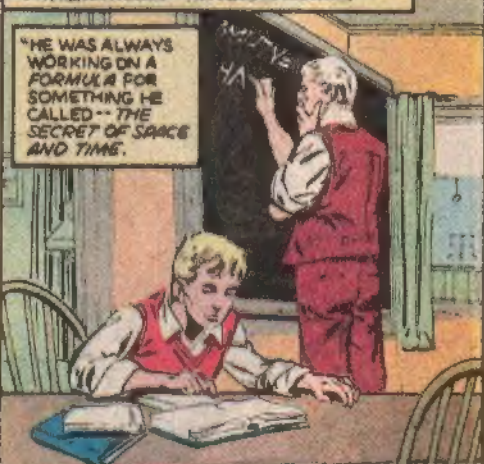


IF I KNEW THE FUTURE, I WOULDN'T BE A MATHEMATICIAN--I'D BE A MILLIONAIRE.



"ACTUALLY, Prof. EZRA GILL WASN'T JUST A MATHEMATICIAN--HE WAS A GENIUS.

"HE WAS ALWAYS WORKING ON A FORMULA FOR SOMETHING HE CALLED--THE SECRET OF SPACE AND TIME.



"ME? MY IDEA OF A GOOD DAY WAS ADDING 2 + 2 AND GETTING THE SAME ANSWER TWICE.

"WHEN HOMEWORK GOT TO BE TOO MUCH FOR ME, I'D ESCAPE TO THE MOVIES.

--NEW PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT HAS SAID, IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS--

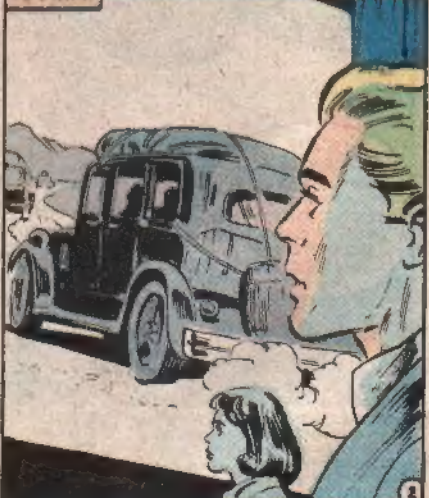


-- "WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR BUT FEAR ITSELF

"I GUESS THAT'S HOW I FELL IN LOVE WITH NEWS-REELS. SURE WASN'T THE NEWS ITSELF, WHICH WAS MOSTLY ABOUT BREADLINES AND BANK CLOSINGS...



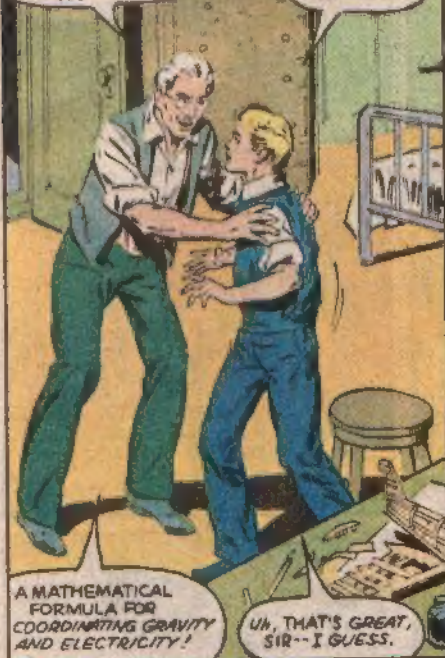
"...AND 'OKIES' TAKING OFF FOR CALIFORNIA AND A PROSPERITY THEY WEREN'T LIABLE TO FIND."



THEN, ONE NIGHT, PROF GILL BROKE INTO MY ROOM, ALL EXCITED...

JOHNNY, MY BOY--
I'VE FINALLY GOT
IT!

GOT WHAT,
PROFESSOR?



A MATHEMATICAL
FORMULA FOR
COORDINATING GRAVITY
AND ELECTRICITY!

UH, THAT'S GREAT,
SIR-- I GUESS.

YOU BET YOUR AUNT FANNY IT IS!
THIS PIECE OF PAPYRUS FROM THE
TOMB OF KING AMON GAVE ME
THE CLUE.

I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

MY FORMULA UNLOCKS A
TREASURE HOARDED BY
NATURE--THE SECRET OF
SPACE AND TIME!



REMEMBER THIS EQUATION,
MY BOY, AND NEVER REPEAT
IT TO ANYONE!

SKR(9YZ)4A!

WAIT, SIR! YOU HAVEN'T
BEEN TOO WELL LATELY.
YOU SHOULDN'T--



"BE IT NOT SAID
THAT ANYBODY
COULD EVER TELL
EZRA GILL MUCH
OF ANYTHING..."

"...AND AFTER WHAT I SAW THE NEXT
SECOND, I WASN'T MUCH IN THE
MOOD TO TRY!"



YOU SEE,
JOHNNY? I'M
A REGULAR
PETER PAN!

PLEASE,
PROFESSOR--
COME DOWN,
BEFORE YOU
HURT YOURSELF!

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE
IT! YOU WERE FLYING.

YOU WERE ACTUALLY
FLYING--FOR THE
FIRST TIME!

YES.
THE--THE
FIRST TIME--
AND THE
LAST!



HUH?
WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?

HAVEN'T YOU
GUESSED--FROM
THE WAY-- MY
HEALTH'S BEEN
LATELY?

I--HAVEN'T LONG TO
LIVE, LAD, SO I WANT--
TO PASS ON MY FORMULA
TO YOU-- IF YOU'LL SWEAR
TO USE IT WISELY--IN THE
CAUSE OF JUSTICE.



YOU'RE NOT GONNA
DIE, PROFESSOR.
IT WAS JUST A
DIZZY SPELL...

THAT'S NOT --WHAT THE DOCTORS TELL ME, LAD. NOW SWEAR--PLEASE--

SWEAR TO TRY HARD TO LEARN THE FORMULA--USE IT FOR GOOD--WHEN I'M GONE.



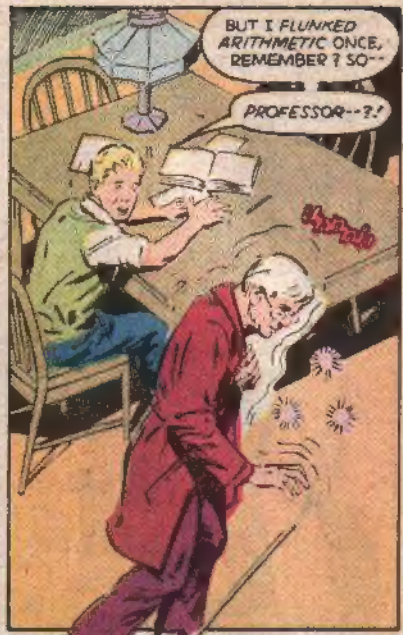
OKAY, SIR, I SWEAR, BUT YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY, I TELL YOU...!

"IN THE WEEKS TO COME..."

NO, JOHNNY. I'VE LEARNED IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO MEMORIZE THE FORMULA. YOU MUST ALSO UNDERSTAND IT--PICTURE ITS MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS EVEN AS YOU SPEAK IT!



I'M TRYING, HONEST--AND SOMETIMES I ALMOST GET IT--



BUT I FLUNKED ARITHMETIC ONCE, REMEMBER I SO--

PROFESSOR--?!



PROFESSOR! TALK TO ME!

HE'S UNCONSCIOUS! I'VE GOTTA GET THE DOCTOR!



DAMN BLIZZARD! TONIGHT--OF ALL NIGHTS!

WELL, AT LEAST NO COPS LIABLE TO STOP ME AND FIND OUT I DON'T HAVE A LICENSE!

"I DOUBT EVEN BARNEY OLDFIELD COULD'VE KEPT A CAR ON THE ROAD THAT NIGHT, AND PRETTY SOON--"



STILL SEVERAL MILES TO THE DOC'S PLACE.

I'LL NEVER MAKE IT IN TIME!



CAN BARELY RUN--IN ALL THIS SNOW! IF ONLY I'D MASTERED THAT BLASTED FORMULA--

3X2(9Y2)4A!



NO GO! GOTTA KEEP SAYING IT--THINKING ABOUT IT! THE PROF'S LIFE IS AT STAKE!

3X2(9Y2)4A!



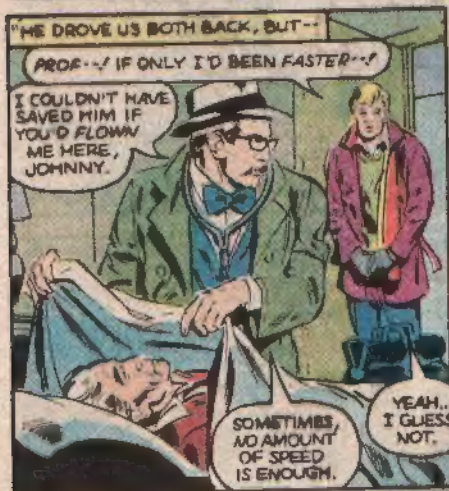
NOTHING! WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME, ANYWAY? IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF NUMBERS AND STUFF!

3X2(9Y2)4A!



WHY? WELL, I'LL BE A--

IT WORKED!





OKAY, THEN YOU'RE A TEAM-- JUST FOR TODAY. ONE OF MY BOYS FELL OFF AN ELEPHANT-- AND I NEED FOOTAGE OF THE KING OF ENGLAND AT THE FAIR.

THADDEUS W. MORGAN
PRODUCER

WOW! YOU MEAN THE WORLD'S FAIR!?

WADDA YOU THINK I MEAN-- SOME COUNTY FAIR?



NOW GET GOING-- AND DON'T COME BACK WITHOUT A STORY TOLD IN PICTURES!

YOU GOT IT, MR. MORGAN!

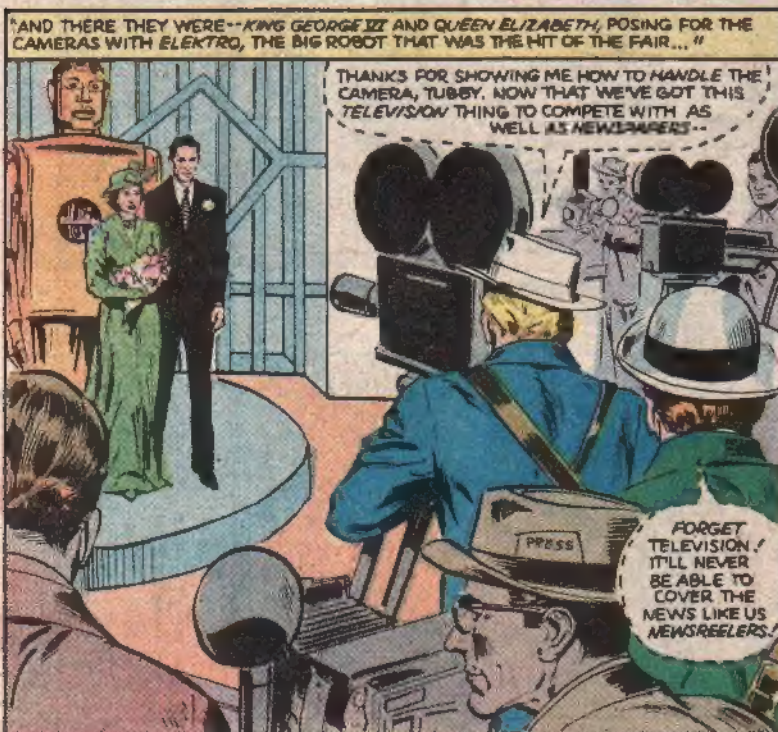
RIGHT-- SURE AS MY NAME IS TUBBY WATTS!



"TUBBY AND I HIT IT OFF JUST GREAT. SOON, AT THE WORLD'S FAIR..."

PRETTY IMPRESSIVE, HUH? IF ONLY HALF THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED HERE DIDN'T SEEM ON THE VERGE OF GOING TO WAR WITH THE OTHER HALF...

Aw, THAT'S JUST A LOTTA MOOEE, BUDDY. THERE AIN'T GONNA BE A WAR.



"AND THERE THEY WERE-- KING GEORGE III AND QUEEN ELIZABETH, POSING FOR THE CAMERAS WITH ELEKTRO, THE BIG ROBOT THAT WAS THE HIT OF THE FAIR..."

THANKS FOR SHOWING ME HOW TO HANDLE THE CAMERA, TUBBY. NOW THAT WE'VE GOT THIS TELEVISION THING TO COMPETE WITH AS WELL AS NEWSPAPERS--

FORGET TELEVISION! IT'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO COVER THE NEWS LIKE US NEWSREELERS!



YOU SURE PICKED UP ON WORKING THAT MOVIE CAMERA FAST, THOUGH. MAYBE YOU OUGHTA CHANGE YOUR NAME TO JOHNNY QUICK!

I'VE ALREADY GOT A NAME, THANKS.

BOY! I FEEL LIKE I WAS BORN FOR THIS JOB!

"I SPOKE A SECOND TOO SOON, THOUGH--'CAUSE JUST THEN, ELEKTRO WENT WILD, COURTESY OF A HIGH-POWERED GENT CALLING HIMSELF THE PHANTOM OF THE FAIR..."

"...AND NEARLY CRACKED BOTH CROWNED HEADS, WHILE SANDMAN AND THE CRIMSON AVENGER WERE PLAYING ONE-ON-ONE IN THE RAFTERS."

"THEY GOT THEIR ACT TOGETHER JUST IN TIME, THOUGH, AND THE PHANTOM RAN FOR IT."

"ME? OH YEAH, I FORGOT TO MENTION-- THE PHANTOM TOSSED A GUARD INTO ME AND I WENT OUT LIKE A LIGHT BEFORE I COULD FINISH SPOUTING MY SPEED FORMULA--"

"--OR ELSE THAT WORLD'S FAIR WOULD'VE BEEN FAMOUS FOR ONE MORE THING: THE DEBUT OF JOHNNY QUICK, ESQ.!"

* SEE SECRET ORIGINALS #7. -- Roy

"TUBBY'D KEPT THE CAMERA ROLLING ALL THROUGH IT, THOUGH, SO WHEN WE GOT BACK TO THE OFFICE..."

"IF THIS FILM SHOWS WHAT YOU FELLAS SAY IT DOES--YOU'VE GOT A JOB FOR LIFE?"

"NOBODY ELSE GOT SO MUCH AS A SNAPSHOT OF THE ACTION!"

"THAT'S GREAT, MR. MORGAN, BUT IT WAS REALLY TUBBY WHO--"

"--JUST GOT LUCKY TO HAVE A GUY LIKE JOHNNY CHAMBERS ALONG."

"AND SO A PERMANENT TEAM WAS BORN. SINCE THEN, TUB AND I'VE SHOT A LOT OF FOOTAGE TOGETHER, MOSTLY OF THE PRESIDENT."

"WHEN MUSSOLINI STEPPED IN TO PICK UP THE SCRAPS LEFT OVER WHEN HITLER SWAMPED FRANCE:"

"THE HAND THAT HELD THE DAGGER HAS STRUCK IT INTO THE BACK OF ITS NEIGHBOR!"

"WHEN FDR WAS NOMINATED FOR A THIRD TERM:"

"I WOULD LIKE TO STICK BY THOSE PEOPLE OF OURS..."

"BITTER A THIRD-TERMER THAN A 3rd RATER!"

"...YES, STICK BY UNTIL WE REACH THE CLEAR, SURE FOOTING AHEAD."

"WHEN ENGLAND'S VERY EXISTENCE WAS THREATENED BY NAZI GERMANY:"

"WE MUST BECOME THE GREAT ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY!"

"FOR MYSELF, I DIDN'T KNOW IF THE FORMULA WOULD WORK FOR ME AGAIN... AND I TOOK THE WORLD'S FAIR INCIDENT AS AN OVEN THAT I SHOULDN'T EVEN TRY."

"GOT TO ADMIT, THOUGH, I USED TO DREAM UP LITTLE IMAGINARY TALES IN MY HEAD IN WHICH 'JOHNNY QUICK' BECAME THE SCOURGE OF THE UNDER-WORLD."

"ROB THE POOR, HUM? YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!"

"THE CASE OF THE MONEY-MAD MISER!"

"THE CASE OF THE ARMORED TRUCK!"

"BACK TO THE SEWER, RAT!"

"THE CASE OF THE MURDEROUS MUSICIAN!"

"YOU'LL SOON BE PLAYING A DIFFERENT TUNE!"

"THE CASE OF THE PHAROAH'S MUMMY!"

"YOU'RE ALL READY FOR THE HOOSEGOW-- WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED!"

"PRETTY SNAPPY REPERTEE I'D IMAGINED FOR MYSELF, HUM?"

"I GUESS I WAS JUST PRIMING MYSELF, EVEN PICTURING MYSELF IN A COSTUME LIKE SANDMAN AND THE REST OF THAT NEW JUSTICE SOCIETY BUNCH."

"BUT THE CLINCHER CAME WHEN TUBBY AND I WERE FILMING A BENEFIT PERFORMANCE OF 'DU BARRY WAS A LADY,' WITH BERT LAHR AND ETHEL MERMAN..."

"BOY, THAT LAHR REALLY CRACKS ME UP. YOU SEE HIM IN THAT 'WIZARD OF OZ' PICTURE, JOHNNY?"

"GOOD LORD!"

"I DIDN'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHO THAT GUNMAN WAS AIMING AT-- BUT I COULD TELL THAT WASN'T ANY CAP PISTOL HE WAS BRANDISHING!"

"I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO THINK ABOUT IT, THAT TIME. I JUST STARTED TO BLURT IT OUT..."

"3x2/9Y--"

"SURE DID, TUB. IT--HUM?"

"--WHEN SUDDENLY, I SAW A STREAK OF RED, GOLD, AND BLUE TEARING DOWN THE AISLE--"

TIME TO GET GOING!

"I RECOGNIZED HIM INSTANTLY, OF COURSE, EVEN THOUGH HE HADN'T BEEN AROUND FOR LONG."

"IT WAS THE FLASH!"

NOW THESE NICE PEOPLE CAN HOLD ON TO YOU WHILE I GO AFTER YOUR BOSS, BACK IN KEYSTONE CITY!

YOU KNOW WE WILL, FLASH!

--IF I'D FINISHED SAYING MY SPEED FORMULA!

WONDER WHO THIS FLASH GUY REALLY IS.

MAYBE HE STUMBLED ONTO THE SAME SECRET PROFESSOR GILL DID.

"COURSE, I DIDN'T KNOW THEN, LIKE I DO NOW, THAT JAY GARRICK GOT HYPER-SPEED POWERS BY INHALING A BUNCH OF RANDOM GASES WHILE HE WAS OUT COLD ONE NIGHT."

"MAYBE OUR POWERS ARE RELATED, AT THAT--BUT IF THEY ARE, WE'LL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW IT."

WELL, ANYWAY, LOOKS LIKE THE FLASH IS ALL THE HIGH-SPEED HERO THE WORLD NEEDS.

HE'D PROBABLY HAVE BEEN FAST ENOUGH TO SAVE PROF. GILL THAT NIGHT--BUT I WASN'T!

"YEAH, EVEN AFTER SEVERAL YEARS, I WAS STILL BLAMING MYSELF FOR GILL'S DEATH."

"AND MAN, DID HE MAKE FAST WORK OF THAT WOULD-BE KILLER!"

I WOULDN'T

OWWW!

WOK!

BLAM

BLAM

WERE

IF I

YOU!

WOW! THAT GUY'S REALLY SOMETHING, MUH, JOHNNY?

INDUBITABLY, MR. WATTS.

STILL, I'LL BET I'D HAVE GIVEN HIM A REAL RUN FOR HIS MONEY--

*FOR THE FLASH'S STORY, RETOLD FROM FLASH COMICS #1, 1940; SEE SECRET ORIGINS #9. THE ABOVE THEATRE SCENE, BY THE WAY, IS ADAPTED FROM FLASH #2. --Roy.



"SO I PUSHED MY OWN FORMULA INTO THE BACK OF MY MIND AGAIN... AND TUBBY AND I DID OUR LEGWORK THE HARD WAY FOR THE NEXT YEAR

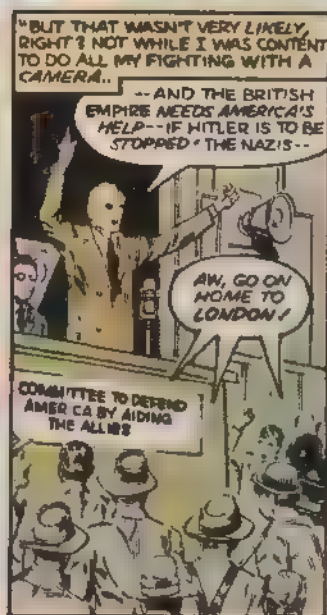
HURRY, TUB! THAT FIRE WON'T WAIT FOR US!

C-COMING, JOHNNY!



YOWEE! THAT'S SOME BLAZE! YOU THINK IT WAS SABOTAGE?

I'D LAY MONEY ON IT 'LORD, IF I EVER GOT MY HANDS ON THOSE AXIS RATS--!

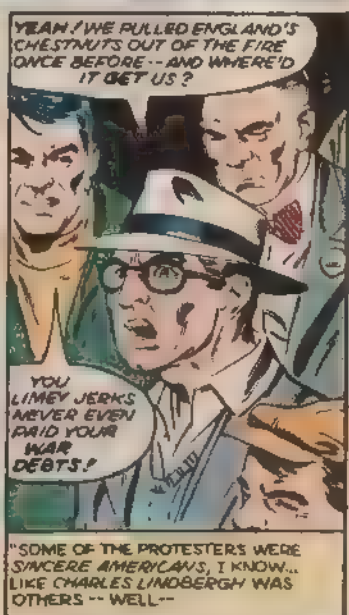


"BUT THAT WASN'T VERY LIKELY, RIGHT? NOT WHILE I WAS CONTENT TO DO ALL MY FIGHTING WITH A CAMERA...

-- AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE NEEDS AMERICA'S HELP-- IF HITLER IS TO BE STOPPED-- THE NAZIS--

AW, GO ON HOME TO LONDON!

COMMITTEE TO DEFEND AMERICA BY AIDING THE ALLIES



YEAH! WE PULLED ENGLAND'S CHESTNUTS OUT OF THE FIRE ONCE BEFORE-- AND WHERE'D IT GET US?

YOU LIMEY JERKS NEVER EVEN PAID YOUR WAR DEBTS!

"SOME OF THE PROTESTERS WERE SINCERE AMERICANS, I KNOW... LIKE CHARLES LINDBERGH WAS OTHERS-- WELL--



"ANYWAY, THE FLASH KEPT ON ROUNDING UP SPIES--AND I KEPT WISHING ONE DAY I'D GET A CHANCE TO MEET HIM, AND ASK HIM WHAT HIS SECRET WAS

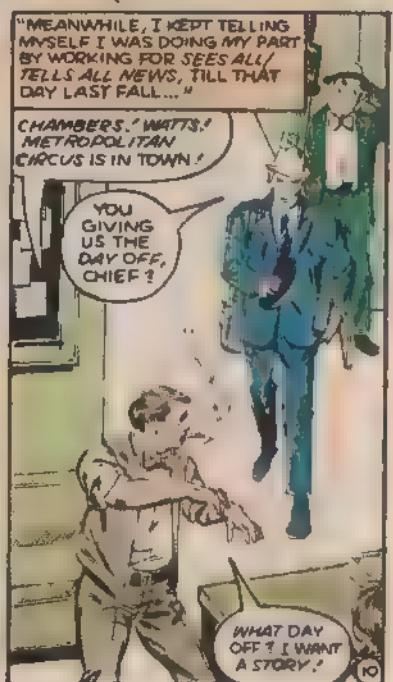
"LOTS OF OTHER MYSTERY-MEN POPPED UP, TOO-- LIKE THE HAWKMAN... THE GREEN LANTERN... DOC FATE.



"CONGRESS WAS FINALLY STARTING TO TAKE THE AXIS THREAT SERIOUSLY, TOO, EVEN PASSING A DRAFT LAW AND BEEFING UP OUR DEFENSES.

"BUT, AS ADMIRAL STARK SAID-- 'DOLLARS CAN'T BUY YESTERDAY.'

"CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS. --R.

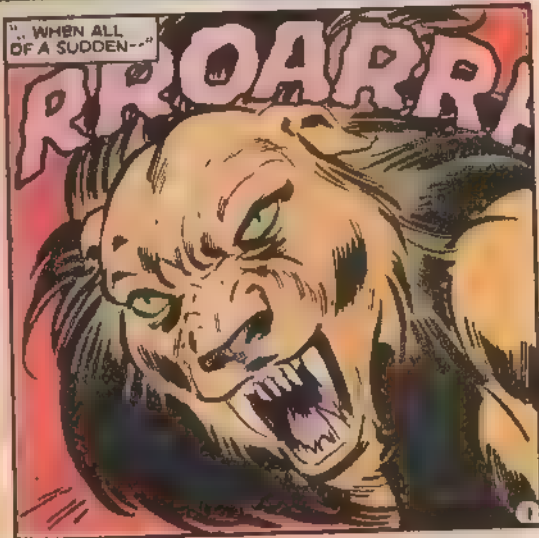
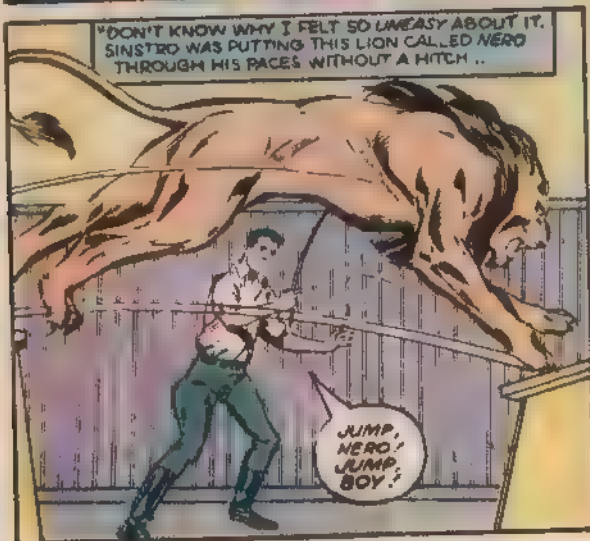
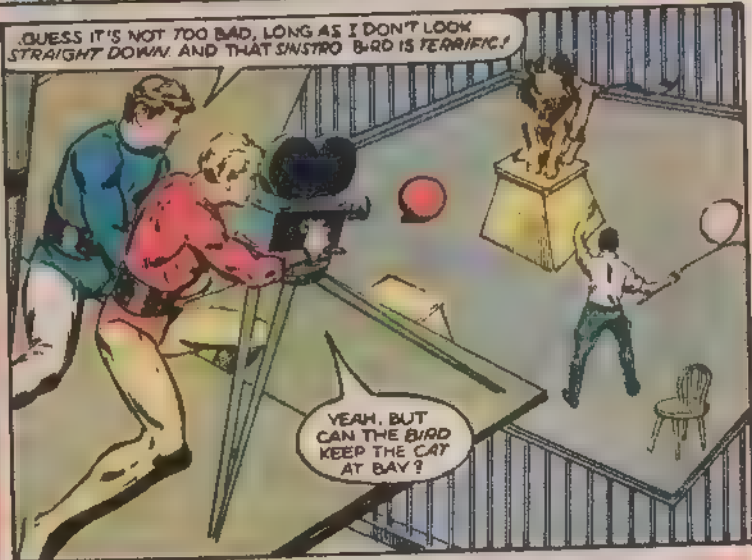
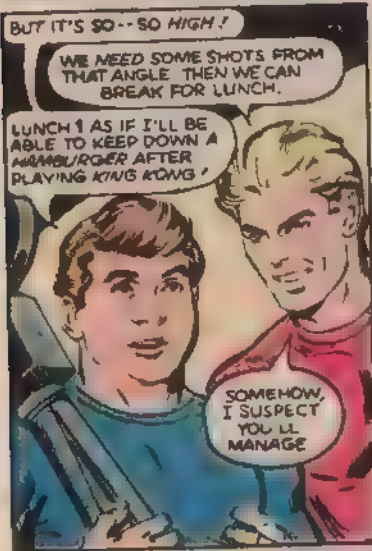
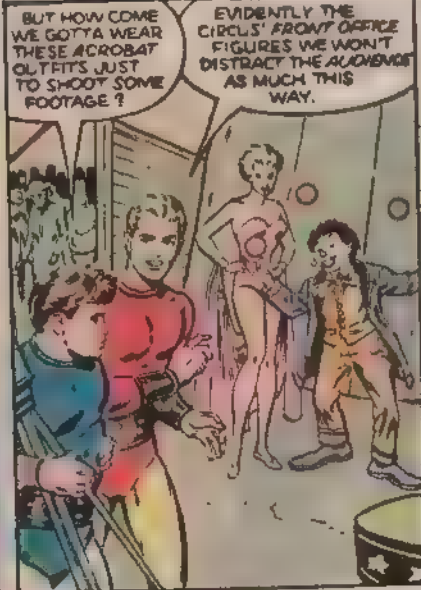
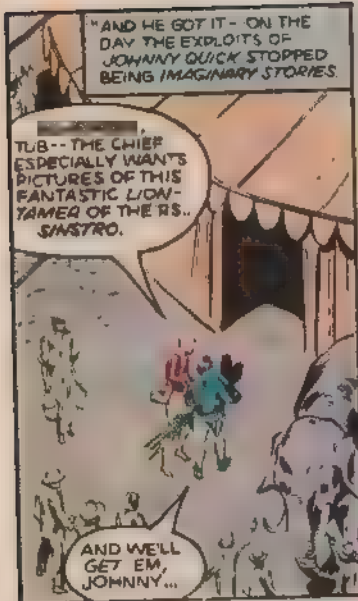


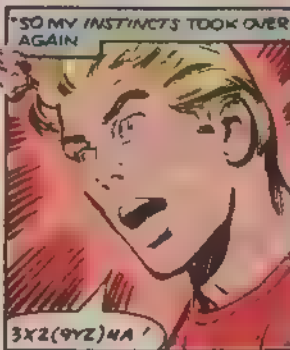
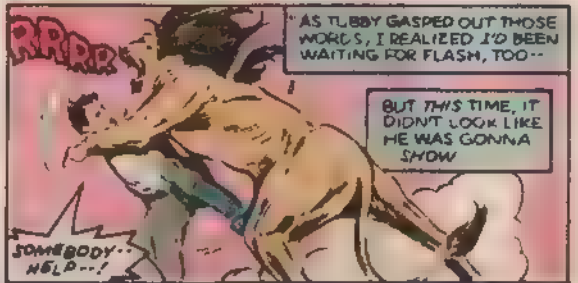
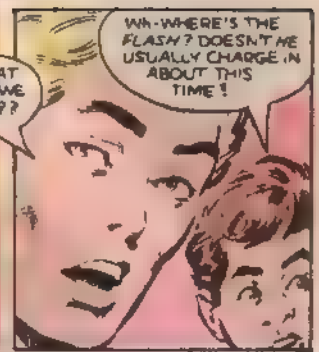
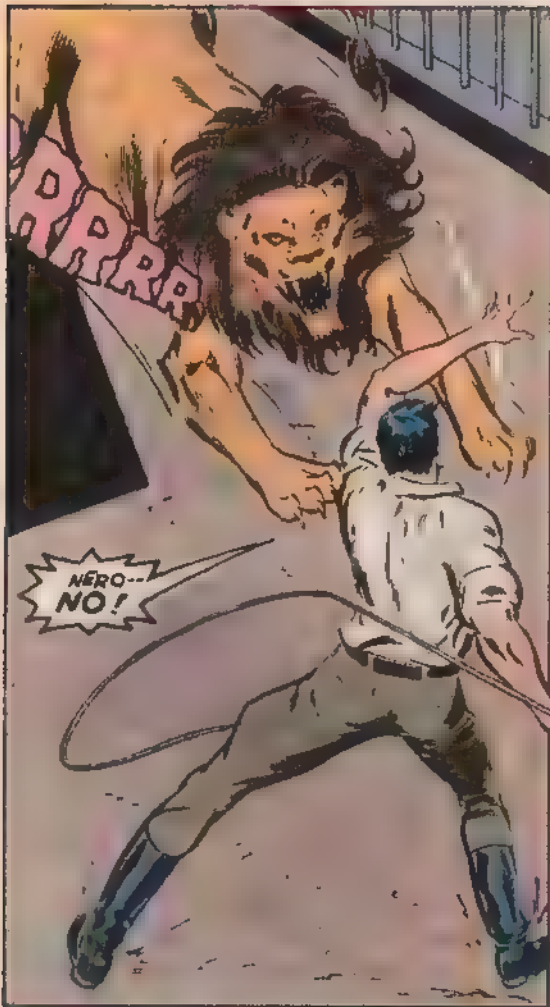
"MEANWHILE, I KEPT TELLING MYSELF I WAS DOING MY PART BY WORKING FOR SEES ALL! TELLS ALL NEWS, TILL THAT DAY LAST FALL..."

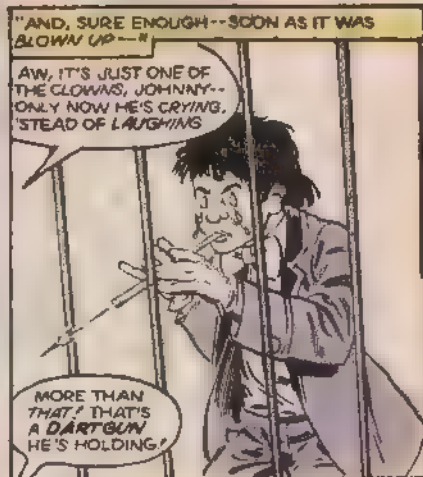
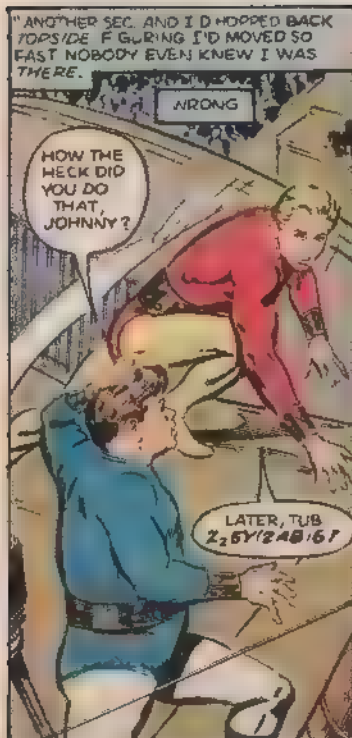
CHAMBERS! WHATTS! METROPOLITAN CIRCUS IS IN TOWN!

YOU GIVING US THE DAY OFF, CHIEF?

WHAT DAY OFF? I WANT A STORY!









HUH? YOU GONNA GO BACK THERE? HEY-- YOU STILL GOT ON YOUR ACROBAT GEAR!

FORGOT TO TAKE IT OFF IN ALL THE EXCITEMENT

IT'LL COME IN HANDY ONCE I'VE PERSONALIZED IT A LITTLE



HEY, I LIKE THE WINGS, BUT WHAT'S WITH THE MASK?

DON'T WANT ANYBODY GETTING MAD AT SEES ALL/ TELLS ALL IF I GET CAUGHT SNOOPING AROUND, DO I?

HOW ABOUT ME?



3X2(9VZ)4A!

GUESS I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SURPRISED TO FIND OUT LATER THAT TUBBY GOT KINDA MFFED AT MY COMMENT--



...AND TRIED THE SPEED FORMULA HIMSELF!

er--3X2-- NO--

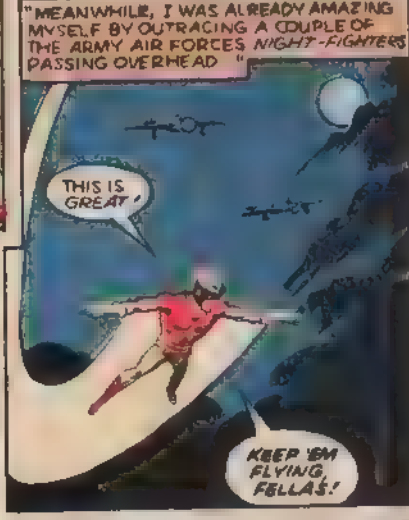
3X2(9VZ)4A!

BUT OF COURSE--



...IT DIDN'T DO HIM A WHOLE LOT OF GOOD

NUTS!



"MEANWHILE, I WAS ALREADY AMAZING MYSELF BY OUTRACING A COUPLE OF THE ARMY AIR FORCES NIGHT-FIGHTERS PASSING OVERHEAD"

THIS IS GREAT!

KEEP 'EM FLYING, FELLA'S!



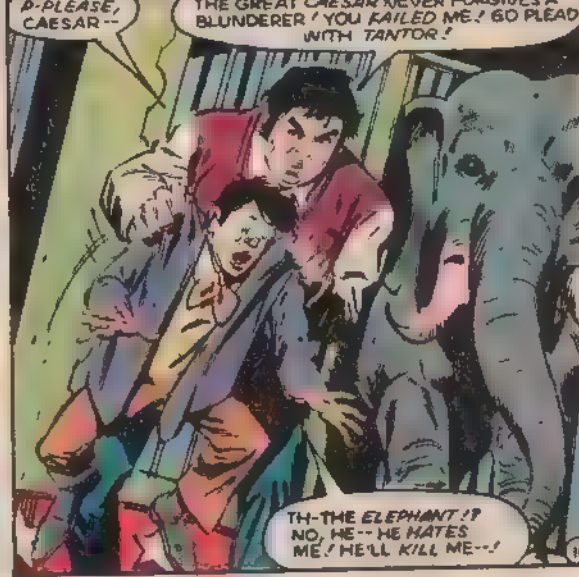
THERE'S THE CIRCUS BETTER SLAM DOWN MY BRAKES

2:5V(3A)6!



GOOD THING I SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN BOTH FORMULAS DOWN PAT NOW, OR I'D HAVE SQUASHED MYSELF FLATTER THAN A-- HUH?

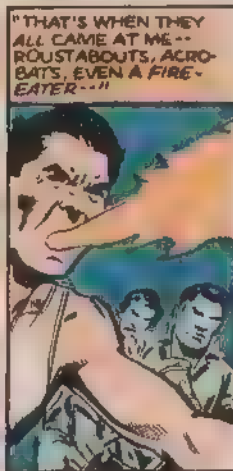
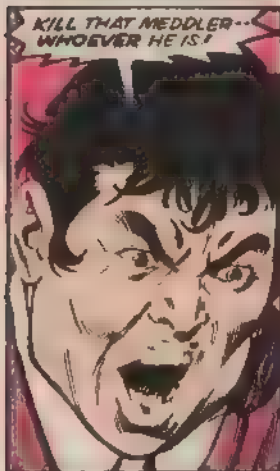
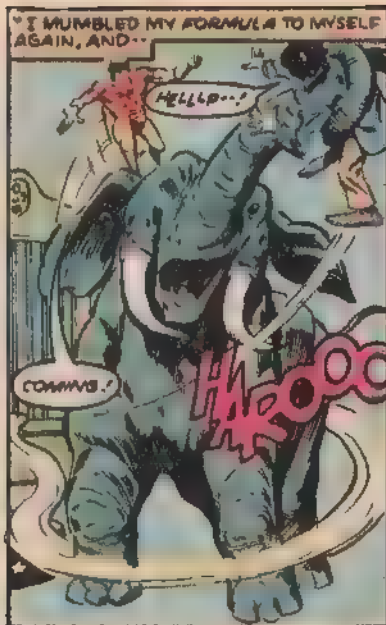
MAIL, CAESAR! FORGIVE ME!



D-PLEASE, CAESAR--

THE GREAT CAESAR NEVER FORGIVES A BLUNDERER! YOU FAILED ME! GO PLEAD WITH TANTOR!

TH-THE ELEPHANT?? NO, HE-- HE HATES ME! HE'LL KILL ME--!





"IN A FEW SECONDS, THEY WERE ALL DOWN FOR THE COUNT-- BUT CAESAR HAD MANAGED TO FLY THE COOP..

I'LL GIVE YOU MORE THAN CROCODILE TEARS IF YOU DON'T TELL ME--

WHY DID YOU BLOW A DART AT NERO THE LION?

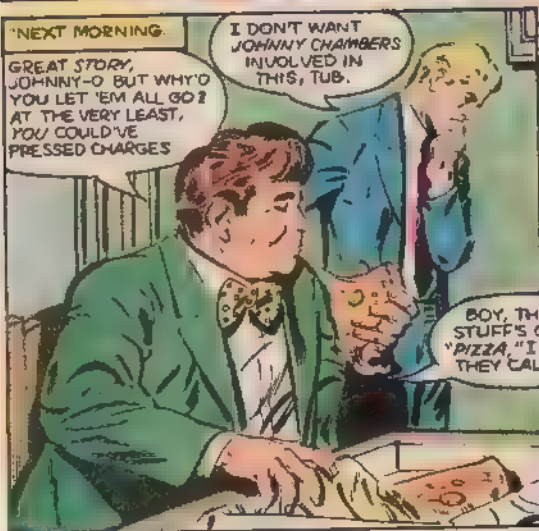


D-DON'T ASK ME, PLEASE-- HE'D KILL ME IF I SQUEALED!



"THE CLOWN HAD CALLED MY BLUFF... AND I REALIZED I WASN'T GOING TO BEAT UP ON HIM, AFTER ALL.

OKAY, I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING MORE FOR ME TO DO AROUND HERE

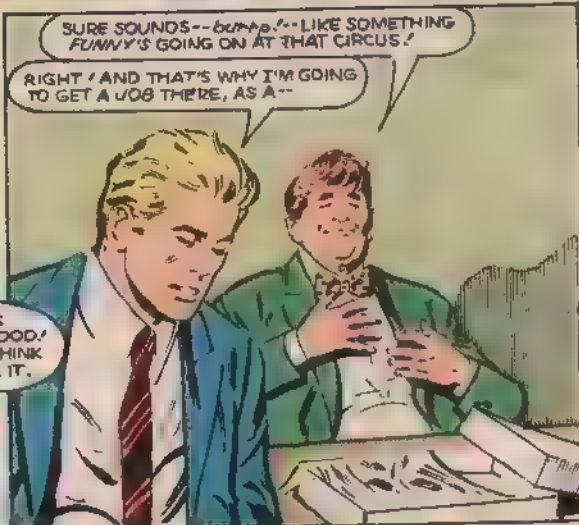


"NEXT MORNING.

GREAT STORY, JOHNNY-O BUT WHY'D YOU LET 'EM ALL GO? AT THE VERY LEAST, YOU COULD'VE PRESSED CHARGES

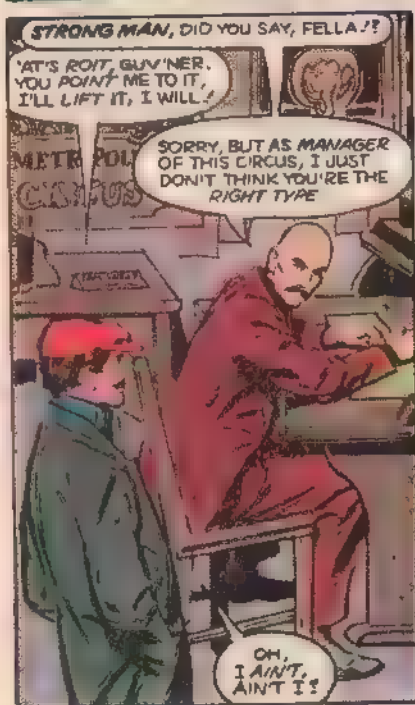
I DON'T WANT JOHNNY CHAMBERS INVOLVED IN THIS, TUB.

BOY, THIS STUFF'S GOOD! "PIZZA." I THINK THEY CALL IT.



SURE SOUNDS-- BUTT, P... LIKE SOMETHING FUNNY'S GOING ON AT THAT CIRCUS!

RIGHT! AND THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO GET A JOB THERE, AS A--



STRONG MAN, DID YOU SAY, FELLA!?

'AT'S ROIT, GUV'NER. YOU POINT ME TO IT, I'LL LIFT IT, I WILL!

SORRY, BUT AS MANAGER OF THIS CIRCUS, I JUST DON'T THINK YOU'RE THE RIGHT TYPE

OH, I AIN'T, AIN'T I?



AN' JUST WHAT TYPE WOULD THAT BE AGAIN NOW, GUV'NER!

MY GOD IN HEAVEN--!

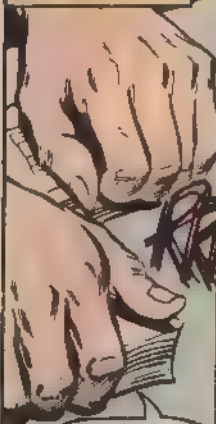
"ALL THE CIRCUS MANAGER SAW OR FELT WAS ME LIFTING HIM, CHAIR AND ALL.



REALLY, THOUGH I WAS RACING AROUND AT A TERRIFIC SPEED--

"--SO IT WAS ACTUALLY THE WINDS I CREATED THAT WERE DOING THE LIFTING."

"I TORE A PHONE BOOK IN HALF FOR HIM, TOO



SEE, GUV'NER? WIT' MY BARE HANDS!

"COURSE, I DID IT BY TEARING A FEW PAGES AT A TIME, AT SUPER-SPEED, BUT HE DIDN'T NOTICE



"HE WAS BLINKING HIS EYES AT THE TIME.

TH- THEY GROW 'EM STRONG OVERSEAS, DON'T THEY? OKAY YOU'RE HIRED!

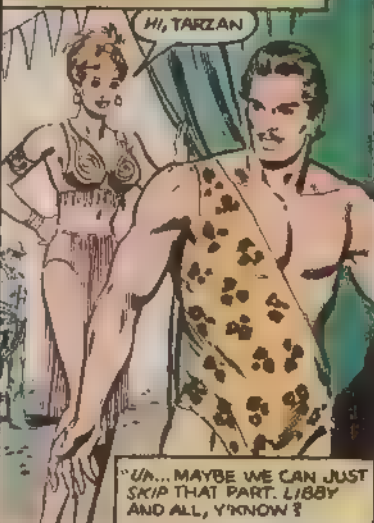


HAVING A STRONG MAN WHO WEIGHS UNDER 300 POUNDS MIGHT DO THIS CIRCUS SOME GOOD.



COUNT ON IT, GUV!

"DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO START GETTING ACQUAINTED...



HI, TARZAN

"UN... MAYBE WE CAN JUST SKIP THAT PART. LIBBY AND ALL, Y'KNOW?

"ANYWAY, I SOON DROPPED A FEW HINTS I WASN'T QUITE WHAT I SEEMED...



GREAT PLACE FOR A BLOKE WANTS TER FADE INTO THE CROWD, HEY?

YEAH, MAYBE I WOULDN'T KNOW.

LOOK, THERE'S A MEETING-- MIDNIGHT, IN THE BIG TENT CAESAR'D LIKE TO MEET YOU. IN FACT-- CAESAR COMMANDS!



CAESAR? HE DOES HEY? WELL, GUV, WHY NOT?

"TURNED OUT CAESAR'S MESSAGE WAS SHORT AND SWEET...



WE STRIKE TO-NIGHT-- AT THE HOTEL ROYAL AND REMEMBER--

DEATH TO ANY WHO FAILS!

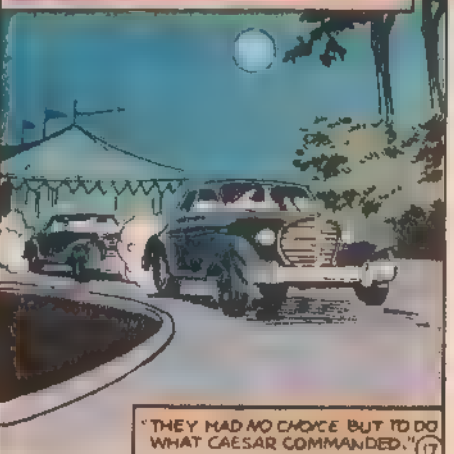
SOUNDS GOOD, IF THEY'S MONEY IN IT. BUT WHO'S THIS CAESAR BLOKE?



NOBODY KNOWS BUT WHEN CAESAR COMMANDS-- WE OBEY!

OR ELSE!

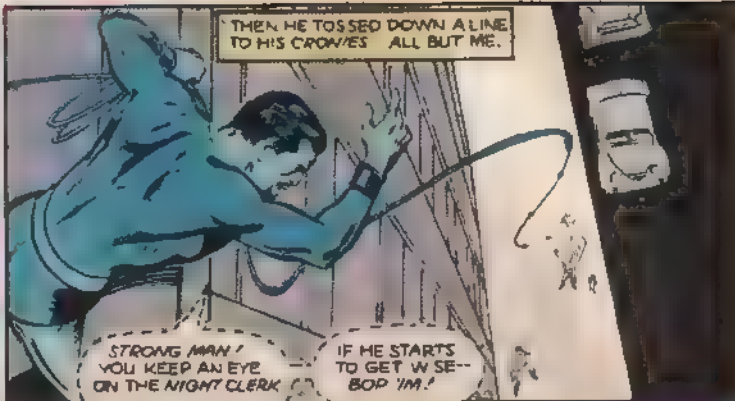
"TURNED OUT THESE GUY'S HAD ALL BEEN BANNED BY OTHER CIRCUSES, FOR STUFF RANGIN' FROM BAD ATTITUDE TO DEADLY ASSAULT



"THEY HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DO WHAT CAESAR COMMANDED." (17

"PRETTY SOON, ON THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON, I SAW WHAT THIS TROOP DID ON ITS NIGHT OFF

FIRST OFF, AUGUSTO THE ACROBAT SCRAMBLED UP A FEW STORIES LIKE HE WAS A HUMAN FLY



THEN HE TOSSED DOWN A LINE TO HIS CROWES' ALL BUT ME.

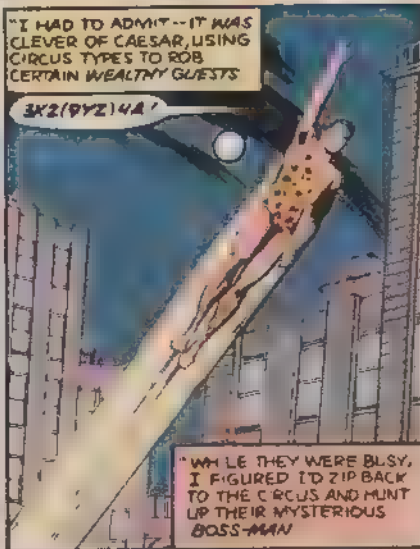
STRONG MAN! YOU KEEP AN EYE ON THE NIGHT CLERK

IF HE STARTS TO GET W SE-- BOP 'IM!



YEP, THIS IS THE PLACE ALL RIGHT, COWBOY.

THEN YUH'LL FIND THE MONEY IN THE TOP DRAWER, SHORTY



"I HAD TO ADMIT--IT WAS CLEVER OF CAESAR, USING CIRCUS TYPES TO ROB CERTAIN WEALTHY GUESTS

3X2(9YZ)4A!

"WHILE THEY WERE BUSY, I FIGURED I'D ZIP BACK TO THE CIRCUS AND HUNT UP THEIR MYSTERIOUS BOSS--MMN!



... FOR A SHOWDOWN!

SWEET RACKET YOU'VE GOT HERE, CAESAR--BUT I'M ABOUT TO DIVIDE YOU INTO THREE PARTS!

I'M SMOCKED YOU'VE DECIDED TO BETRAY ME, STRONG MAN--



"THOUGH NOT AS SHOCKED AS YOU'RE GOING TO BE!

ARREN!



"WHEN I CAME TO...

YOU WON'T ESCAPE FROM THIS TRAPEZE WITH THE GREATEST OF EASE, MY FRIEND

MMM--MMN--!

"THAT'S WHEN I LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT MY SPEED FORMULA WHEN I SLEPT OR LOST CONSCIOUSNESS, IT CUT OUT, AND WOULDN'T KICK IN UNTIL I COULD SAY IT AGAIN--



"WHICH I WASN'T GONNA DO WITH A GAG IN MY MOUTH."

LET'S SEE NOW--WOULD THE LIONS ENJOY YOU MORE--

--OR MAYBE THE ELEPHANT--?



"LUCKY FOR ME, CAESAR WANDERED OFF FOR A WHILE."

"LUCKIER STILL HE DIDN'T SNATCH MY WATCH..."



"...OR I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD ANYTHING TO SMASH WHEN I FINALLY MANAGED TO SWING AGAINST THE WALL..."



"...LET ALONE ANY GLASS TO CUT MYSELF LOOSE."



"GOOD WORK, BOYS! BUT THAT STRONG MAN TURNED OUT TO BE A COP OR SOMETHING."

"I NEVER DID TRUST THEM LIMEYS, CAESAR!"

"THEN YOU CAN BE THE ONE WHO DOES HIM IN, AUGUSTO, RIGHT N--"



"NEXT SECOND, FASTER THAN ANYBODY BUT JOHNNY QUICK, COULD SAY '3X2(9VZ)4A'--"

"ET TU, CAESAR!"

"Whp!"

"UNHAND ME, YOU UNDERCOVER CONNIVER! CAESAR COMMANDS!"



"CAESAR'S ALL THROUGH COMMANDING-- ME OR ANYBODY--"



-- ESPECIALLY AFTER YOUR GANG SEES WHO YOU REALLY ARE UNDER THIS RUBBEROID MASK AND ALL THE PADDING!"

"WH--? WHY, IT'S SAM LEROY--"

"OUR MANAGER!?"



"THEN-- WE'RE FREE! LONG AS WE DIDN'T KNOW WHO CAESAR WAS-- HE HAD US UNDER HIS THUMB. BUT HOW'D YOU KNOW--?"

"LAST TIME I SAW HIM, HE WAS SITTING COMFORTABLY ON A CHAIR, WITH HIS KNEES CROSSED."

"FAT MEN CAN'T DO THAT, I HAPPEN TO KNOW."

"BUT I'M CURIOUS, SMILEY--WHY'D YOU CRY WHEN YOU SHOT THAT LION WITH THE BLOWGUN BEFORE?"

YOU SAW THAT? IT--CAESAR ORDERED ME TO INFURIMATE THE LION INTO KILLING SINSTRO-- 'CAUSE HE WAS GONNA BLAB TO THE CORP.

I HAD TO DO IT-- BUT I LOVE THAT LION! I COULDN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT NERO'D HAVE TO BE SHOT!

WH-WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO US NOW? YOU GONNA TURN US IN, STRONG MAN?

GOT TO, FROM THERE ON, IT'S UP TO THE JURY.

COURSE, YOU CAN ALWAYS MAKE A RUN FOR IT--BUT I MIGHT AS WELL WARN YOU--

THERE'S NO PLACE YOU CAN RUN FAST ENOUGH TO GET AWAY FROM JOHNNY QUICK!

Up! WHEN HE'S RIGHT-- HE'S RIGHT.

LO PAL.

Huh? OH--THAT'S YOU, UNDER THE FAKE FUZZ, IS IT?

WHAT'S THE MATTER? RUN OUT OF PEOPLE YOU COULD IMPRESS?

AW, DON'T BE THAT WAY, TUB. SORRY I HURT YOUR FEELINGS WITH THAT "YOU'LL SLOW-ME-DOWN" STUFF.

I JUST DIDN'T WANT TO PUT YOU IN DANGER, THAT'S ALL.

WAS IT? SOUNDED MORE TO ME LIKE YOU DON'T TRUST ME.

I MEAN, I KNOW YOUR SPEED SECRET AND ALL-- BUT YOU KNOW I'D NEVER TELL ANYBODY, IF YOU WANNA KEEP IT A SECRET.

WAY I FIGURE IT, THAT KINDA MAKES US PARTNERS, DOESN'T IT?

YEAH, I-- I GUESS IT DOES, AT THAT.

OKAY, THEN! 'COURSE, I DON'T KNOW IF 'JOHNNY QUICK' 'LL EVER FLY AGAIN--BUT IF HE DOES, TUBBY WATTS WON'T LET HIM DOWN.

FLY AGAIN? YOU KNOW, I'LL JUST BET HE DOES, OLD BUDDY.

IN FACT, I CAN PRACTICALLY GUARANTEE IT!

"YOU KNOW THE REST, TARANTULA. BY THE TIME I MET LIBERTY BELLE THE DAY THEY BOMBED PEARL HARBOR, JOHNNY QUICK WAS THE SECOND MOST FAMOUS SPEEDSTER KICKING AROUND ANYWAY.

"I'VE TRIED TO DO MY BIT FOR LAW AND ORDER, LIKE I FIGURE PROF. GILL WOULD'VE WANTED, BY HELPING START THE ALL-STAR SQUADRON, EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT BASICALLY A JOINER.

"I GUESS IT SHOWED, HUH? I TENDED TO BE PRETTY MUCH OF A HOTHEAD FOR THE FIRST FEW MONTHS THERE.

"ANYWAY, I KNOW IT'S JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS SINCE LIBBY AND I TIED THE KNOT... HECK, WE HAVEN'T EVEN DECIDED YET WHETHER TO TELL THE WORLD WE'RE MARRIED, EITHER AS ALL-STARS OR AS NEWSHAWKS...

"...BUT SOMEHOW, I THINK I'M GONNA LOOK BACK ON 1942 AS THE YEAR THAT REALLY CHANGED MY LIFE.

"TUBBY? HE'S STILL THE ONLY NON-ALL-STAR WHO KNOWS MY LITTLE SECRET..."

"AND THE BEST PAL A MYSTERY-MAN EVER HAD!"

"SO, WEB-WEAVER... YOU WANNA FLIP FOR WHO FEEDS THE COKE MACHINE?"

Next:
THE ORIGIN OF TARANTULA!



DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS SCENE?

You might, if you're a longtime reader. 'Cause this was artist Jerry Ordway's first try at doing a DC cover (for issue #11) a few years back. Turned out then-editor Len Wein had already asked Joe Kubert to do one, so this one's been on the shelf since '82.



But now, as the first series of ALL-STAR SQUADRON nears its end, it seemed like a good time to finally print it, as a tribute to Jerry's important contribution to this, his first series.

—R.T.

Jerry
Ordway
1982